

STEPS FOR PARENTS TO PROTECT YOUR CHILD AND FAMILY FROM THE FLU DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR

(There are 4 main ways you and your family may keep from getting sick with the flu at school and at home)

- 1. Practice good hand hygiene** by washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective (rub cleaners until the hands are dry to be most effective).
- 2. Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder; not into your hands.
- 3. Stay home if you or your child is sick** for at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever (**without the use of fever-reducing medicine**). A fever is a temperature taken with a thermometer that is equal to or greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius). If you are not able to measure a temperature, signs of a fever may include a feeling of warmth, a flushed appearance or sweating or shivering. Keeping sick students at home means that they keep their viruses to themselves rather than sharing them with others.
- 4. Get your family vaccinated** for the seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu when vaccines become available.

Follow these steps to prepare for the flu during the 2009-2010 school year:

- Plan for child care at home if your child gets sick.
- Plan to monitor the health of the sick child and any other children in the household by checking for fever and other symptoms of the flu. **These symptoms may include: fever, body aches, runny or stuffy nose, sore throat, nausea or vomiting or diarrhea.** You should stay home and avoid contact with others.
- Identify if you have children who are at higher risk of serious disease from the flu and talk to your healthcare provider about a plan to protect them during the flu season. Children at high risk of serious disease from the flu include: children under 5 years of age, and those with chronic medical conditions, such as asthma, diabetes, etc.
- Identify a separate room in the house for the care of sick family members
- Update emergency contact lists.
- Collect games, books, DVDs and other items to keep your family entertained if your child is sick and must stay home.

Columbia Public Schools is in constant collaboration with the Boone County Health Department to provide you and your family with the most current updates on the flu.